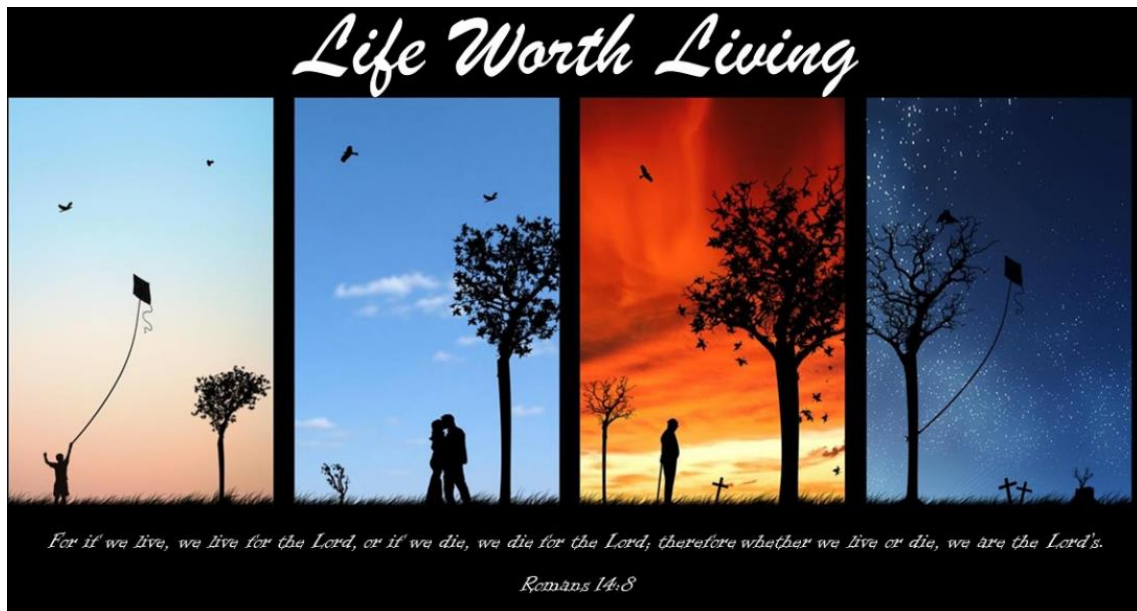


September 17 Adult Spiritual Growth Class Synopsis

Life Worth Living Study – Week 2 – Jesus Questions and Ebenezer Moments



The reference Life Worth Living is filled with compelling questions at the end of each chapter to help us reflect and understand where our lives hold meaning and where things need to change with adaptation and application to life for us as followers of Christ. The study will help us to reflect deliberately on and honestly assess this life of faith that has been given to us up to this moment while moving forward.

Jesus is often thought of as giving answers but, actually, He is full of questions. His questions were for His disciples and followers, for those who opposed Him, for those who benefited from His miracles of healing and wholeness and those who were present, and certainly for us today. Jesus asked 307 questions in Scripture. Conversely, Jesus answered only 3 of 183 questions He is asked. Jesus used questions to drive home a point; to get people thinking; confer dignity; initiate conversation; expose deceitfulness; lead people to a deeper knowledge and understanding of God, others and themselves and opened up the possibility of a new world with eyes to see. Such was given to the blind beggar Bartimaeus when Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" in Mark 10:51.

Even as a boy, Jesus was found sitting among the teachers in the temple *asking them questions*, 'And all who heard him were amazed' (Luke 2:47). Jesus asked questions that can be easily answered (Matthew 5:13) and questions with no obvious answer (Luke 18:19). He answers questions with questions of his own, either to drive home a point (Luke 7:42) or to expose deceitfulness (Mark 12:14–15), or to get people thinking. On at least one occasion He states that He does not know the answer to a question addressed to him (Mark 13:4a and 32).

A devotional from the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) speaks to the power of the question. It can be tempting for Christians to spend time attempting to give answers, even to questions no one is asking. In all of this, we can remain deaf to what is actually going on around us. However, Jesus' approach is radically different. In inviting all to live in God's kingdom, Jesus is acutely aware of what is going on around Him, and He asks questions accordingly.

If we are to be authentic disciples of Jesus, asking questions is an important practice to imitate our Lord. Starting from an understanding that the better way is to listen before we speak, what questions could we ask of those we share our lives together? People are less concerned with what we know but want to be assured that we care. We care by listening.

In Mark 5:22-34, Jesus asks a puzzling question, but one that changes a woman's life, "Who touched me?" A crazy thing to ask in the circumstances but Jesus wants an answer. Is it because He doesn't know who has touched Him? Or does He want the woman to know that He knows and approves of what she has done? Does He want her to own her actions and understand that it is her faith, not some magical power, that has saved her?

Mark 5:22-34 "Who touched me?"



The story of this woman takes place within a larger story. Jesus is on his way to a synagogue leader's house to heal his dying daughter ([Mark 5:21-24](#)) when an unnamed woman causes an interruption to His progress.

What we know about the woman is, first, she had a bleeding condition, and the issue had continued for twelve long years. Second, she had spent all her money on treatments from many doctors, and nothing had helped. In fact, the blood issue had only grown worse ([Mark 5:25-26](#)). We also know that Jewish Law declared her to be ceremonially unclean due to her bleeding issue ([Leviticus 15:25-27](#)). This meant that she would not have been permitted to enter the temple for Jewish religious ceremonies. According to the Law, anything or anyone she touched became unclean as well. The fact that she was in the crowd pressing around Jesus means that each person who bumped into her would have become unclean, too—including Jesus. But, after twelve years of suffering, she was obviously desperate for a miracle. "When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed'" ([Mark 5:27-28](#)).

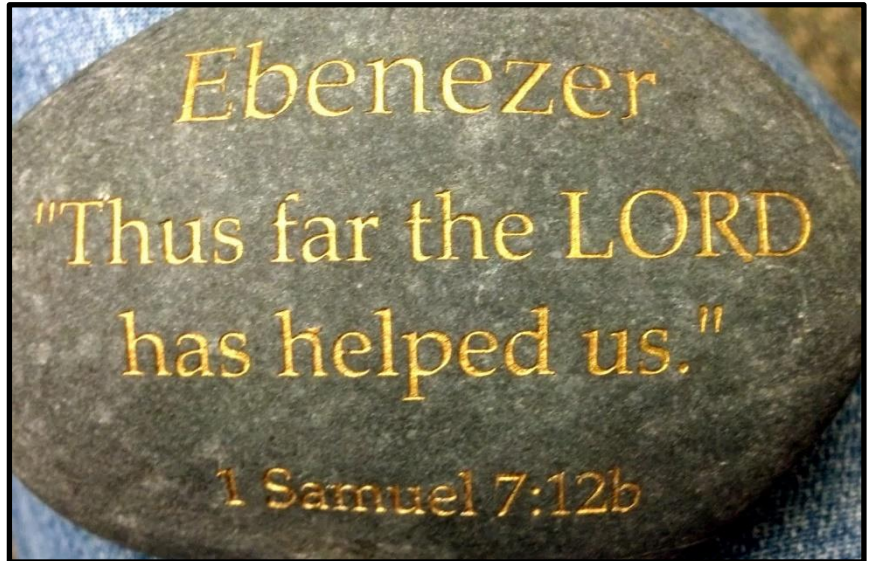
As soon as the woman touches Jesus, her bleeding stops and she knows she's been healed. In an instant, Jesus does what no doctor in twelve years had been able to. This proves the power of Christ, of course, but it also illustrates an important point about Jesus and the Law. In [Leviticus 15:31](#) God says, "You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them." In the Old Testament, the temple was where God dwelt among the Israelites, but in the New Testament, God dwelt among men in the person of Jesus Christ (see [John 1:14](#)). Through Jesus the penalties of the Law are reversed, and the contamination of this world had no effect on Christ. The woman did not make Jesus (God's dwelling) unclean—He made her clean!

Jesus immediately responds to the woman who touched His clothing and was healed. People were pushing and pressing into Him from all over, yet He stops, turns, and asks, "Who touched my clothes?" ([Mark 5:30](#)). The disciples were incredulous, but Jesus knew that healing power had gone out of Him. After the woman comes forward and explains herself, Jesus clears up any misconceptions about her healing, saying, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering" ([Mark 5:34](#)). God is moved to action by our faith, even when He's in the middle of doing something else!

Jesus could have healed the woman and kept on walking to His original destination. Only He and the woman would have known what had taken place. But He didn't do that. Jesus stopped what He was doing and acknowledged the result of this woman's faith: her complete and instantaneous healing.

A life worth living is one that has Ebenezer moments - Good News when God has shown Himself through His help in a time of need just as with the woman who just wanted to touch Jesus' robe to be healed. Our Come and Be Fed dinner on September 10 focused on our Ebenezer moments.

What Does Ebenezer mean in the Bible? What's an Ebenezer stone used for? Ebenezer literally means stone of help.



The stone of Ebenezer should signify to us that trusting in anything or anyone short of Christ is a precursor to failure. Ebenezers are places and times of victory that the Lords has given us.

A Place of Victory

When the Philistines neared Israel, a "great thunder" scared and shook up the Philistines ([1 Samuel 7:10](#)). This state of dismay allowed Israel to prevail.

Samuel memorialized the victory and set a stone between Mizpeh and Shen. [1 Samuel 7:12](#) tells us he "named it Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far the Lord has helped us.'"

Because of Samuel's faithfulness and Israel's repentance and newfound faith in the one true Lord, "the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all of the days of Samuel" ([1 Samuel 7:13](#)).

Ebenezer moments are faith building and can be life changing. As followers of Christ we are called to share these moments of Good News with one another, to give honor and glory to God.

Looking ahead – Sunday September 24

Life Worth Living Introduction and Part 1 Chapter 1, "What's Worth Wanting"

Work questions from Introduction if haven't yet

Work questions from Chapter 1